

We know that there was no need for Jesus to be baptized. He could not be freed from sin since there was no sin in Him. Jesus was baptized as an example to us and even though the action was similar the reasons are different. Jesus had no need to be healed from original sin as we did. He had not established His Church yet so there was no church there to welcome Him. Yet Jesus, in His final instructions to His Apostles, He said:

“ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME.
GO, THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS,
BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT
I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.
AND BEHOLD THAT I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS UNTIL THE END OF
THE AGE.” Matthew 28: 18-20

Now Luke's account of the Lord's baptism is slightly different from Matthew and Mark's. We have heard that the Holy Spirit made His appearance as Jesus was coming out of the water, and a voice from heaven was clearly heard. We have probably seen pictures of Jesus coming out of the water with the Dove above him. But Luke makes the point that Jesus was praying after all were baptized, when the Holy Spirit appeared like a dove and the Father's voice was heard. So he clearly decided to pray about the event that just occurred and then He received affirmation with the Father's blessing. Luke was clearly reminding us that we must act on our baptism in order to bring the Holy Spirit into our world.

Now many of us were baptized as infants and probably do not remember our baptism. So let's take the time to review the steps that we experienced and how these symbols have meaning in our everyday life.

FIRST we are welcomed into the Church with the sign of Jesus sacrifice, His cross, and of the Trinity, the Sign of the Cross on your forehead by the priest or deacon and by your parents and godparents.

SECOND you were anointed with the oil of chrism with this prayer.

“AS CHRIST WAS ANNOINTED PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING, SO MAY
YOU ALSO LIVE AS A MEMBER OF HIS BODY, SHARING
EVERLASTING LIFE”.

We are challenged to live as a priest who shares a love and concern for God's sheep, a prophet who speaks for God in certain situations when necessary, and as a servant king who puts other's needs before their own.

THIRD is the water baptism. The water is a sign of new life and a healthy and growing life. It can be likened to God's flowing grace which is always available to all of us; we just need to remember to ask for it in prayer.

FOURTH you were given a white garment as a reminder to turn your back on your old life and put on the white garment of Christ. In other words to BE CHRIST TO OTHERS. In the Book of Revelations we read in Chapter 7 about the TRIUMPH OF THE ELECT.

“AFTER THIS I HAD A VISION OF A GREAT MULTITUDE, WHICH NO ONE COULD COUNT, FROM EVERY NATION, RACE, PEOPLE AND TONGUE. THEY STOOD BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE THE LAMB, WEARING WHITE ROBES AND HOLDING PALM BRANCHES IN THEIR HANDS. THEY CRIED OUT IN A LOUD VOICE. SALVATION COMES FROM OUR GOD, WHO IS SEATED ON THE THRONE, AND FROM THE LAMB.” Revelations 7: 9-10

Note: At your funeral they will drape your casket with a white cloth to represent the white garment that you received at your baptism.

FIFTH you will be given a LIGHTED CANDLE, a symbol of the LIGHT OF CHRIST. A very special light that shows us our path in life and things that we cannot see without Christ's wisdom and grace. Your parents were instructed to keep that light burning in order to insure your way home to heaven.

FINALLY your ears were blessed TO HEAR GOD'S CALLING and your lips were blessed TO SHARE THAT CALLING with everyone that you meet.

No wonder why Jesus instructed His Apostles to baptize new disciples of all nations and desiring Baptism for all of His sheep. What a beautiful sacrament we have received from Jesus to welcome us into His Church and guide us to our home in heaven.

WHAT A GREAT GIFT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS.

May we never let this precious gift of our faith life get old and die. May it always grow healthy and strong from our watering and care from the waters of our Baptism.